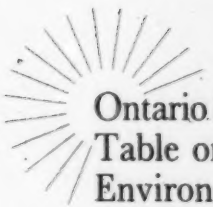
Sectoral Task Force Report

URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE



Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy

Table ronde de l'Ontario sur l'environnement et l'économie

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Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy

Table ronde de l'Ontario sur l'environnement et l'économie

The Honourable Ruth Grier
Chair
Ontario Round Table on
Environment and Economy
790 Bay Street, Suite 1003
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Dear Minister:

The Urban Development and Commerce Task Force is pleased to submit its sectoral task force report.

In interpreting its assignment, the Task Force chose to focus its attention on implementation of sustainable development at the local level. During its tenure, the Task Force consulted with a cross-section of communities throughout Ontario and a wide range of stakeholders including business, associations, local government, environmental and other interest groups. This input was most valuable to the development of the report.

The members of the Task Force appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution to the work of the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy.

Respectfully submitted,

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PREFACE

This report is one in a series prepared for the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy. The Round Table was established in 1988 by the Government of Ontario to create a sustainable development strategy for the province. The Honourable Ruth Grier, Minister of the Environment, is its Chair.

To assist in the creation of a sustainable development strategy, the Round Table established six task forces responsible for the Agriculture and Food, Energy and Minerals, Forestry, Manufacturing, Transportation, and Urban Development and Commerce sectors. It also set up a Native People's Circle to provide the Aboriginal perspective on sustainable development.

The sectoral task forces were charged with reporting to the Round Table on how best to begin to achieve sustainability in each sector within the context of the six principles set out by the Round Table in its **Challenge Paper**. These are:

- anticipation and prevention of environmental problems;
- the use of full cost accounting;
- informed decision-making which reflects environmental impacts and long term goals;
- living of the interest and reserving our "natural capital";
- quality over quantity; and
- respect for nature and the rights of future generations.

The Round Table also asked the task forces to consult with stakeholders in developing their overall strategy for sustainable development. Through a combination of research and formal and informal meetings with stakeholders, the task forces and the Native Circle have documented the state of each sector and the options and obstacles to sustainability, as well as their recommendations for action.

The sectoral task force reports will be forwarded to the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy. The final recommendations will be considered by the Round Table as it prepares a Provincial strategy for sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Report Structure

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of how to implement sustainable development in the urban development and commerce sector. The introduction provides a background of the task force process and membership. Chapter Two begins with a discussion of the application of the concept of sustainable development to the urban setting. The chapter continues with a brief review of the urban patterns that exist in Ontario and the problems that have arisen as a result of unsustainable practices. From this review of the past and present the report shifts to the future with an outline of the task force vision of a sustainable community. The remainder of the report deals with the challenges of implementing sustainable development in Ontario. Chapter Four lists the constraints and opportunities that need to be addressed. It is quite evident that some municipalities have already taken the first steps towards sustainability. Chapter Five presents examples of some of the sustainable development initiatives in the urban development sector. Building on the experience of local communities and responding to the constraints and opportunities, the task force suggests further actions in chapter six. The final chapter offers specific recommendations for the Round Table to include in its sustainable development strategy for Ontario.

1.2 Task Force Process

The urban development and commerce task force, which began meeting in February 1991, is part of a larger Round Table consultation process which has included public feedback on the Challenge Paper, an Environmental Breakfast and meetings with local Round Tables.

The task force consultation program consisted of focused consultation with a selection of key stakeholders. The purpose of the consultation was to give stakeholders an initial opportunity to contribute their ideas about sustainable development to the task force. The second phase of the consultation begins with the circulation of this report to a much wider list of stakeholders.

Members of the task force visited nine municipalities across Ontario and met with a variety of local representatives, including staff, elected councillors and members of the public. The following municipalities participated in the consultation:

1. Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth
2. Town of Hawkesbury
3. Town of Midland
4. City of Oshawa
5. City of Ottawa
6. City of Sault Ste. Marie
7. Regional Municipality of Sudbury
8. Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto
9. Regional Municipality of Waterloo

2. SUSTAINABILITY IN THE URBAN CONTEXT

2.1 Defining Sustainable Urban Development

As a first step in discussing the current relationship between urban development, commerce and sustainable development, it is necessary to define these concepts. "Our Common Future" the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, defined sustainable development in terms of meeting the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Inherent in this concept is that sustainable development must reconcile the need for economic development with conservation of the resources on which growth depends, and in a broader sense, with preservation (and enhancement) of the entire natural environment.

One of the primary aims of sustainable development is to close the raw material - production - product (either goods or services) - waste cycle. This can be accomplished by promoting more efficient patterns of urban development; reducing energy use, raw material use, emissions and other wastes, and recycling and reusing wastes wherever possible.

Another aim of sustainable development is to ensure that the economic base, and the infrastructure required to support that base, is sustainable in the long run. In densely urbanized areas of Southern Ontario where the economy has been buoyant until recently, the challenge is to mitigate the negative impacts of the pattern of economic growth that have occurred such as congestion, pollution, or consumption of agricultural lands for urban uses; and to devise alternatives which ensure that future development does not repeat the same mistakes.

In other parts of Ontario, such as single-industry towns, and communities based on resource extraction industries, sustainable development has to address the issue of economic survival. Many of these communities are characterized by lack of diversity in their economic base, or by boom-bust cycles. What actions are needed to improve the economic sustainability of these communities; how much it will cost, both financially and environmentally; whether or not the benefits outweigh the costs; and possible alternatives to traditional approaches, are issues which must be addressed when reviewing the long term sustainability of these communities, and determining future strategies.

The principle of social equity must also be incorporated into any strategies to implement sustainable development. Unless these strategies also help to create a more equitable and livable human environment, the public will be reluctant to lend its support. If sustainable development is to be politically acceptable, it must have the understanding and support and involvement of people who are affected; and implementation processes must be open and fair.

Developing a more sustainable society will also require substantial changes in public attitudes and expectations. Our society currently relies on continued economic growth to satisfy the public's expectations of rising affluence and living standards. If a society based on sustainable

development, rather than exponential growth, is to be successful over the long term, it must be accompanied by a significant shift in attitudes and values to those that emphasize quality of life rather than the accumulation of material wealth.

2.2 Urban Development Patterns in Ontario

Ontario has approximately one third of the country's population and most of Ontario's population can be found living in the highly urbanized southern portion of the province. This region contains ten of the country's largest cities. Consequently, the impact of urban centres on the ability to achieve sustainability in the province cannot be underestimated. Progress towards sustainability in the urban development and commerce sector will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the health and well being of the province and nation as a whole.

The relationship between urban development patterns and sustainability is more than simple cause and effect. The task force recognizes that many of the current forms of development are not sustainable and in fact contribute to the perpetuation of unsustainable practices by separating housing, shopping and work into different districts. For example, low density, single family detached housing developments perpetuate a pattern of high energy use for heating, high infrastructure development and costs, and automobile dependence (which also increases energy use and emissions into the air). At the same time there are certain forces which support the continuation of certain types of development (public attitudes, institutional and legislative barriers and financial incentives, i.e taxes etc.).

Any strategy for sustainable development must consider sustainability in both the local and regional context. On a regional scale Ontario has a variety of types of communities ranging from large metropolitan centres to single-industry frontier towns to small rural service centres. Sustainability on a regional scale must focus on regional economic development and the impact of regional development patterns on resource use, the consumption of agricultural land for urban uses and the protection of wilderness areas and significant natural features. On the local level sustainability relates largely to the pattern of the built environment (housing, offices etc.) and human activity within urban centres. The impacts of unsustainable activity in urban centres is not usually the result of a direct, large scale assault on the environment, but rather is the cumulative effect of people going about their everyday lives, travelling to work and shopping, building and heating homes and offices: what many view to be the necessities of daily urban life.

Present urban forms and urban development patterns in Ontario have created a number of problems which can be grouped into three categories or symptoms of urban distress: ecological, economic and social.

The ecological symptoms include the pollution of air, water and soil, the loss of farmland and the destruction of the natural environment and wildlife habitat, high waste production and noise. The economic symptoms include the erosion of the economic base of many Ontario towns,

particularly those bordering the United States and those primarily dependent on a single industry or a non-renewable resource. The social symptoms include such trends such as increasing numbers of unemployed and homeless peoples and the growing demand for affordable housing.

Given the problems faced by Ontario communities it is clear that a reversal in current trends of urban development is needed. The challenge that lies ahead is to determine what sustainable urban development is and how to achieve that goal. The next section outlines the task force's view of a sustainable future.

3. VISION OF A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

The task force has been asked to provide advice on directions for the future of Ontario. To do so, one must have a vision of where we should be headed. Sustainable development cannot be viewed as an end state. It can be described best as a philosophy or approach. It is clear that our current situation demands new ways of dealing with problems.

The task force has defined the goals of a sustainable community:

- to maintain biodiversity
- to ensure a healthy ecosystem
- to enhance and protect the natural ecological processes within the ecosystem
- to minimize the consumption of non-renewable resources
- to use renewable resources on a sustained yield basis
- to support a healthy and stable economy
- to support equitable participation in decision-making
- to minimize waste creation and pollution

The task force has created the following scenario for a sustainable community of the future:

In practical terms, sustainable cities are more compact and patterned to a greater extent in mixed-use configurations. Transportation distances are diminished, the mix of transportation modes used within the city shifts ever-increasingly toward more energy efficient options. Buildings improve in terms of the energy necessary for heating, lighting and cooling. Urban open spaces are more often naturalized, they require less energy and fewer chemicals for

maintenance and indeed less maintenance altogether. These restored and naturalized green spaces also absorb more runoff, reducing the burden on improved water treatment facilities and seasonal demand for water. The urban economy as a whole is sharply less dependent on material resources extracted from nature and produces only a fraction of present day levels of waste materials.

Sustainable communities have a diverse and secure economic base which impacts minimally on biodiversity and ecological process within its borders. They emit an absolute minimum of pollutants into the water, air and soil and they minimize the consumption of resources at every opportunity. They reduce, re-use and recycle wastes and they minimize "greenfields" developments of all kinds. They recognize that land and habitat are the most important resource of all.

Achieving sustainable development in an urban context is a profound challenge. If our urban areas are to move toward sustainability they must rapidly become significantly more efficient in their per capita use of energy, materials,land and water. This cannot be done without some changes in habits and in some cases, loss of convenience. The first steps towards sustainable development are difficult because they are interpreted as ones which detract form our current desired standard of living. Using less is viewed as reducing the standard of living. As society's values shift to incorporate an understanding of the long term future and an appreciation of quality over quantity, a new definition of quality of life will be derived. A community developing along the path to sustainability is one in which the security, satisfaction and well-being of the population are maintained or improved without any decline in natural wealth, the quality of the environment, or the abundance of our resource options.

The task which lies ahead then, is to find ways in which to make cities more compact without making them more congested. Personal mobility within cities should be based primarily on buses, street cars, subways, cycling and walking rather than the automobile. Wastes must be radically reduced. Goods and services have to be produced with less energy and less non-renewable materials. All this must be achieved without significantly reducing economic productivity. The task is to develop urban forms which are more energy, land and materials efficient, but no less livable, equitable, creative and dynamic. This seems to be a simple and direct prescription for a healthier future, yet the task force is well aware of the complexities of the issues and the difficulty in effecting change. The challenge is not to determine what the future should be like but to determine how we should get there. Agreement can be reached on the desire for a clean environment and a healthy economy, however, the difficulty arises in trying to agree on the most appropriate path towards this goal. In contrast to earlier attempts at environmental protection, the sustainable development approach seeks to treat the causes not the symptoms. To do so we must consider the constraints and barriers to achieving sustainable development.

4. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Constraints

Over the years society's perception of and reaction to environmental problems has been tempered by the level of technical knowledge, the prevalent values of the time and political realities. Although values are beginning to shift more favourably towards the appreciation and protection of the environment and great strides have been made in the level of technical expertise, there are a number of constraints and barriers which have consistently blocked progress towards a more sustainable society. Options for sustainable development must address these constraints in order to be effective.

Jurisdictional Splits

Jurisdictional splits in responsibility for issues is a constant source of frustration when dealing with urban issues. The lack of clarity in the division of responsibility and the large numbers of agencies that have some portion of responsibility for an environmental issue make policy development and planning a complicated and arduous task. It appears that needless time is spent in inter-agency circulation and coordination, thus hindering the ability to examine the source of environmental problems. An example of jurisdictional split is the issue of water. At the present time there are six provincial ministries administering nearly forty different water-related initiatives.

Organizational Structure

Similarly, organizational structures may also stand in the way of effective problem resolution. The way in which organizations, government departments in particular, are currently structured has inhibited the ability to integrate the environment and economy. The ability of organizations, to deal with environmental issues has been limited because environmental issues are generally dealt with separately from resource management and economic issues. Environmental policy is generally regarded as an add-on to other policy fields. The result is a systemic barrier to the development of sustainable development policies. The organization of provincial
ministries is an illustration of this problem with separate ministries for environment, natural resource management and urban development. This compartmentalization of environmental issues stands in the way of integrating environment and economy.

Information

An argument can be made for improving technical information to support decision-making. One of the major deficiencies in evaluating land use options is the lack of real information or predictions on cumulative impacts. More information will not necessarily guarantee better decisions, however what is needed is better information and a means to integrate it into the decision making process without adding further costs and time to the decision-making process. Another factor regarding information is the fact that information regarding environmental impacts and costs are not always considering in the decision-making process. While environmental assessments for major public undertakings have been a requirement for a number of years, there is evidence that environmental considerations have not been taken into account in the pricing of resources such as energy and water. Ultimately informed decision-making will require the integration of environmental information into economic decision-making.

Lack of Suitable Methodologies

Related to the improvement of the environmental knowledge base is the need for methodologies for dealing with issues from a sustainable development perspective. In the municipal sector, some municipalities have produced state of the environment reports as a first step in approaching the integration of environment and economy. In the private sector, many firms have conducted environmental audits of their operations and have incorporated the results into their annual reports. Although these initiatives are promising, they represent the minority. Further refinement of methodologies is also required.

Public Attitudes

The achievement of sustainable development goals will be dependent on the participation of all sectors of society. This will necessitate public acceptance of change in the urban environment. To date, the experience has not been promising. In fact, public resistance is often viewed as a major barrier to change in urban communities.

Legislation

The legislation which governs the urban development sector can be described as enabling legislation. As such, it provides a description of the powers given to local governments for various purposes. From the perspective of local government, the legislation is often criticized for its lack of clarity and the inadequacy of the powers delegated to local government. From the perspective of sustainable development, the legislation does not provide the opportunity for integrating environmental and economic decision making nor does it support an ecosystem approach in making land use decisions. Specific examples of limitations of current legislation are the lack of legislative support for the preservation of trees, the lack of requirement in the Ontario Building Code for energy conservation measures in construction and the lack of more detailed guidance on environmental issues in the Planning Act.

Taxation

Although municipalities may support the concepts behind sustainable development, the municipal taxation system may impede implementation of these goals. In the face of declining provincial grants, municipalities must rely increasingly on property tax revenues to pay for maintenance of infrastructure, salaries and other non-capital expenditures. Due to the present structure of the municipal taxation system, these expenditures will have to be financed by future growth in population. More often than not, this new growth in population comes in the form of "greenfields" development which then perpetuates the low density, unsustainable pattern. Population growth in the form of intensification would promote more efficient use of existing services.

Although the above mentioned issues have all been characterized as constraints, on a more positive note they should be viewed as opportunities for change and ultimately opportunities for implementing sustainable development.

4.2 Opportunities

In addition to tackling the constraints and creating opportunities there are a number of other changes or trends in place that support more sustainable practices in the urban development sector.

Public Awareness of Environmental Issues

Recent polls have indicated that public awareness and concern about the environment has remained consistently high over the past several years. Far from being a fad or immediate reaction to what is perceived to be a crisis situation, the Canadian public has consistently ranked the environment as a high priority. This is a clear indication that the public is expecting, if not demanding, improvements in environmental quality.

Greening of Corporate Sector

In the business sector, environmental consciousness is now becoming part of the desired corporate image. As well as being good corporate citizens, many companies have realized that being environmentally responsible is good for business. Businesses have learned new ways to cut costs while reducing energy use and waste. Moreover, as consumers influence change through their purchasing preferences, business is keenly aware of the competitive edge held by those companies that are perceived by the public as environmentally responsible.

Professional, Business and Municipal Organizations

Various organizations connected to the urban development and commerce sector are interested in sustainable development. Some have already taken steps to examine their organizations' policies and sponsor educational events for their members. These organizations hold tremendous potential for implementing sustainable development initiatives. They are valuable sources of information and can offer communications and networking systems that are already in place. The role of these organizations in the implementation of sustainable development should not be overlooked.

Citizen Participation and Environmental Interest Groups

The level of activity of local citizens groups and environmental groups in community projects is quite high. Earth Day activities across the province are a good example. People are volunteering their time to assist with projects such as tree planting, stream rehabilitation, recycling, composting and education projects. Often citizens and environmental groups act on their own but more recently governments and businesses have recognized the value in partnerships. This is one area that could be explored further. Many local initiatives could be implemented at a relatively low cost by tapping the resources of volunteers.

Multi-Partite Agreements

In some cases the best solution to a problem can be found by teaming up with a partner. In the municipal sector special arrangements to share services or facilities have often proved to be the most efficient solution to a problem. As environmental issues are rarely confined by municipal boundaries, multi-partite agreement may provide a means to overcome jurisdictional and boundary matters that complicate the resolution of environmental problems.

Pricing Policies

At the present time, pricing for certain municipal services and commodities (i.e. energy, water) does not encourage sustainable behaviour. Artificially low prices (that do not reflect full cost accounting) and volume discounts to large users do not inspire individuals and /or businesses to conserve resources. Adjustments in pricing policies will allow market forces to induce more sustainable patterns of resource use. Basically, higher prices will force people to conserve and also introduce a market for new technology. But tipping fees at land fills have in the short run only forced the hunt for disposal facilities.

Current Capacity for Change

Although earlier comments suggested that institutions and legislation can act as barriers to change, examples from across Ontario indicate that many changes can take place within our current legislative/institutional framework. Many municipalities have recognized the need to integrate the environment and the economy and many steps have been taken in this direction without necessarily calling it sustainable development.

5. WORKING TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY: POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN PLACE

In spite of the constraints which were discussed in the previous chapter, many sustainable practices are already in place or are being proposed. This gives the task force further cause for optimism and an opportunity to consider current initiatives in light of the goals the task force has identified. The following review of current actions is by no means comprehensive. It represents the information gathered in the task force's focused consultation program and brief review of the literature. While it does not include all initiatives it provides a overview of the kinds of approaches being tested.

The examples include practices that are common across Ontario and some that have been initiated by only a small number of communities. In some cases, the results of these actions are as yet unknown.

1. Local Round Tables

The Round Table model for multi-stakeholder involvement in decision making has proved to be attractive and applicable to the local situation. A number of municipalities have established local round tables and others have shown an interest in pursuing this idea. The Round Table model responds to the need for new decision-making processes to achieve sustainable development. It is an open unregulated process which has potential for equitable participation and consensus building on community issues. It provides a unique opportunity to resolve problems or potential problems without the expense or formality of formal council or hearing procedures. Although the Round Table model can be used effectively to mediate disputes, its strength is the fact that it generally builds on opportunities and views participants as equal contributors to the process. While a Round Table can provide informed input to the decision-making process, it should not be viewed as a replacement for existing decision-making processes.

2. Local Leadership

Local municipalities have the opportunity and responsibility of adopting a leadership stance. To paraphrase, they can and should "lead by example". Several municipalities have examined their own internal operations and programs and taken steps to "green"

their organizations. This has included policies and programs such as purchasing policies, energy efficiency measures in municipal buildings, fleet management, park maintenance and waste management within municipal buildings.

3. Community Sustainable Development Strategy

A number of communities are committed to the development of a local sustainable development strategy. There are several that are well advanced and others that are in the process of being developed. While the processes for strategy development vary from community to community, most involved the local round tables and significant public involvement.

4. Community Projects

Although the local Round Tables represent a community, effort there are examples of specific programs which are based on multi-stakeholder partnerships at the local level. In one example, local citizens, environmental groups and municipal staff are working together on a stream rehabilitation project. Another example allows local citizens groups to implement demonstration projects in waste management. There are also examples of corporate sponsorship of tree planting projects and community forum events.

5. Economic Development Strategy

An economic development strategy is becoming an important item on the municipal agenda. Many municipalities, large and small, have economic development officers or departments within the municipal organization. The interest in economic development stems from the recognition that municipalities can play an active role in shaping the economic future of the community. Although the primary aim of an economic development strategy is to secure a stable economy for a community, many communities have been very specific about the kind of economic development that is desired. As such, the economic development strategy/economic development officer can play a pivotal role in setting criteria for sustainable economic development.

6. Environmental Office /Environmental Coordinator

One new approach which is being tried in several large municipalities is the creation of the position of environmental coordinator and/or office for environmental policy. In some cases, the office or position is part of the overall corporate administration reporting directly to the Chief Administrative Officer. In other cases, the responsibility is lodged in a specific department such as engineering or public health. In all examples, the role of the environmental coordinator or office is to develop or coordinate comprehensive

policies regarding the implementation of sustainable development. Some have progressed as far as determining major components such as environmental protection, education and community leadership.

7. Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The protection of environmentally sensitive lands has become a policy component of many local and regional planning exercises. Lands are designated as environmentally sensitive through the official plan process and are then subject to specific policies. These policies restrict but do not always exclude development on environmentally sensitive sites. These lands include areas such as wetlands, woodlots and ravines. Current practice has demonstrated that it is not necessary to have public ownership of these sensitive lands, in fact some of the most successful sites are those that remain in private ownership.

8. Naturalization of Parkland

Naturalization of parkland involves a shift away from highly manicured and landscaped open spaces. Most parkland is covered in grass and, although this is generally pleasant, it requires excessive maintenance and does not allow for local plant species to grow naturally. Naturalization allows for regeneration of indigenous plant material thereby supporting the goal of biodiversity in the urban environment. Naturalization may also involve the re-establishment or rehabilitation of woodlands and/or wetlands. The reduction in maintenance saves money, energy and eliminates the use of pesticides. An additional benefit is the introduction of a truly natural landscape that is integrated into the urban setting. Naturalization is being tested in limited areas in several municipalities across Ontario.

9. Full Cost Pricing/Resource Conservation Programs

Full cost pricing and specific conservation programs have been introduced in a number of municipalities. The examples of full cost pricing may not reflect the full cost of the service but the increases do reflect a move in that direction. This approach has been applied to waste management services by increasing tipping fees and to the provision of water by increasing water and sewage charges. Pricing policies are often accompanied by conservation programs which encompass a variety of techniques to encourage citizens to use less water or energy. The conservation programs include educational programs, advisory services and incentives to change behaviour or create less waste.

10. Waste Management

While the "Blue Box" is the most commonly recognized local initiative in waste management, many municipalities have a wide variety of waste management initiatives. These include municipal composting projects, grants to local community groups for waste management projects, toxic waste days, household hazardous waste pick-up and increases

in tipping fees at landfill sites. Many businesses and business organizations have also taken initiatives to reduce the amount of waste produced. Offices have implemented paper recycling programs and are beginning to recycle metal and glass as well. Significant measures have also taken place in the construction industry.

11. Re-Use of Buildings

Preservation of existing buildings is most often viewed in historical or cultural terms, however from an environmental perspective, it also represents an opportunity to save resources. Existing structures carry significant amounts of material and energy which should be reused, if at all possible. Building preservation also serves to maintain stability in a community which ultimately contributes to its overall economic well being.

12. Tree Planting and Preservation

Tree planting in parks and along streets has been a traditional activity for municipalities over the years. Recent recognition of the environmental significance of trees, particularly in respect to global warming, has brought renewed interest to tree planting programs. Government, non-profit groups and businesses have been active in community tree planting programs and in public education about trees. As well as planting new trees, preservation of existing trees has become an issue of increasing concern, particularly to municipal governments. Many are seeking new ways to protect existing trees from destruction.

13. Transportation

Sustainable transportation initiatives include policies and programs such as marketing strategies for public transit, introduction of dedicated lanes for public transit vehicles, bicycle paths and increased parking charges. These have been tried in Ontario communities with a varying degree of success. Those communities that are most successful in achieving a modal shift away from the automobile appear to those that have a more comprehensive approach to transportation policies. A comprehensive approach implies a balance of incentives to use transit, walking or bicycles and disincentives for automobile use.

14. Urban Form/Intensification

Intensification of development in the form of redevelopment projects has taken place in a variety of locations across Ontario. Often, the intensification includes a combination of both commercial and residential uses with affordable housing as a key component of the residential development. In some cases, these redevelopment projects have also used existing buildings. The scale of these projects varies from new construction of an entire neighbourhood to the use of vacant space by creating apartments above stores. While many of these projects have proven to be very successful, initial approvals have often

been difficult to obtain due to public resistance to change in existing neighbourhoods and/or legislative barriers (i.e local by-laws).

15. Corporate Leadership

Businesses can have a considerable impact, not only in the reduction of waste and environmental damage, but also in education. Greening of the workplace will no doubt have an effect on employees attitudes. As employees are expected to be more environmentally responsible at work, this environmental ethic will spill over into other aspects of thei lives. There is tremendous potential for education through the workplace. Many businesses, large and small, are now conducting environmental audits and are establishing new environmentally sound policies for the workplace.

16. State of the Environment Reporting

A state of the environment (SOE) report is a status report on the condition of the environment in a specific community. State of the environment reports, sometimes referred to as state of the city reports, have been prepared by a number of local and regional municipalities. State of the environment reporting provides a means of developing an inventory of environmental assets and assessing the health of the environment. State of the environment reports should not be viewed a simply inventories, but as a broadly based review which reflects the social, cultural and economic dimensions of the community. It is an important first step in determining targets, particularly for remedial action. Furthermore, SOE reporting establishes a basis for future reporting and benchmarks for measuring progress. They serve as a useful tool in providing an information base for the generation of community goals and as the foundation of what could become and effective environmental monitoring system.

6. DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The task force applauds the measures that have been undertaken by municipalities throughout Ontario. It encourages the continuation of these efforts, as further actions are needed if we are collectively to make progress towards sustainability. These actions are a combination of measures to remove the barriers to sustainable development and suggestions for innovation in the way we plan and manage our urban environment.

The directions outlined in the following section are based on a number of underlying assumptions about what is needed to achieve sustainable development in the urban development and commerce sector. These assumptions represent a consensus of views of the task force members.

To begin, the task force believes that sustainable development in the urban development and commerce sector requires full participation. The responsibility for achieving sustainable development does not rest solely with government or on new legislation or regulation, but with everyone - government, business, institutions, households and individuals. Therefore, a variety of complementary initiatives must be sought. New initiatives or changes must recognize the shared responsibility and also ensure that any proposal that may provide improvement in one aspect of sustainability does not disadvantage any other group or component within the sector.

Similarly, timing or phasing of change must be considered. In some cases, it may be necessary to implement changes gradually in order to allow for structural adjustments in the economy and to avoid undue hardship. It is apparent that there will be some difficulty in the transitional stages and a strategic approach must be taken to manage the transition.

The clarification of roles and responsibilities of different levels of government is a constant topic in the urban development and commerce sector. The consensus view of the task force is that the provincial government should not be involved in the day to day land use matters of local communities. Municipal governments should be given more autonomy on local issues. At the same time the province should be providing more and better guidance on policy issues for all municipalities to follow.

Technology also plays an important role in sustainable development. Past experience has demonstrated that reliance on certain types of technology has in fact created substantial environmental problems. Consequently it has been recognized that the impacts of technology must be studied more carefully. The task force has observed that there appears to be a wide range of views of the role of technology in the future, from a distrust of technology to a reliance on the "technical fix" as a solution. The task force has identified technology as a major component in the sustainable equation. The potential for alternative technology should not be overlooked.

In summary, future directions should reflect the following:

- a balance of approaches
- shared responsibility
- a multi-sectoral approach
- new technology
- economic restructuring
- government and organizational restructuring
- education

The outline of future directions is divided into two parts; the first deals with broad policy directions and systemic change, the second addresses specific changes related to the various elements of the urban environment.

POLICY DIRECTIONS

1. Provincial Policy Framework

A comprehensive and coordinated policy framework is needed to provide guidance to municipalities. The province's role should be to set the agenda for sustainability in the province and then, set the standards for local municipalities. It is then the responsibility of the local municipality to interpret these guidelines and apply them at the local level. A policy framework will provide a means of protecting provincial interests without direct provincial intervention in local decisions.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation

The complexities of integrating environment and economy demand new measurements. On the surface, gains in environmental quality may seem quite obvious and easy to measure in technical terms, however sustainability implies a balanced community with a healthy environment and economy. Therefore attempts to measure progress must incorporate sets of indicators or conditions.

3. Alternate Technology

Solutions to todays problems require new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things. Although we cannot rely on technology to solve all of our problems, we do need to re-examine the technical practices commonly used today. We should be seeking and applying alternate technology which is more energy efficient, creates less waste and has less impact on the natural environment. .

Examples of successfully applied alternate technology include district heating and cooling or use of plant material for bank stabilization and erosion control.

4. Re-organization of Government Structure

Current government and institutional structures have been identified as obstacles to achieving sustainable development. A specific criticism of government structures is that municipal boundaries do not coincide with ecosystem boundaries thereby making it extremely difficult to implement and coordinate policies.

Responding to this criticism will not be easy. First of all, ecosystem boundaries may not be easy to define and in fact overlap. Secondly, the re-definition of municipal boundaries along natural ecosystem lines may not serve other needs of the community. While this

will ultimately be complicated and disruptive it is incumbent on the province to provide the leadership required in this area.

Nonetheless, until this issue is addressed we will be hampered by counterproductive systems. Three avenues exist for change in government and institutional structures. The first is a realignment of powers amongst current levels of government. The second is an examination of the role of special purpose bodies. A third option would be to make adjustments to municipal boundaries in specific locations.

5. Provincial Programs

The provincial government has a vast number of funding programs which serve the needs of communities. While they were all designed with good intentions, many programs may conflict with sustainable development goals. Even those programs that do not have an apparent bias should be reviewed to incorporate sustainability criteria.

6. Municipal Tax Structure/Municipal Revenue Base

The current municipal tax structure and revenue base has been identified as a barrier to achieving sustainable development. A more equitable system must be sought that would support the needs of both growing and declining communities. Both have difficulty in meeting the demands for infrastructure and operational costs. A new system should be based on quality not quantity. A long term initiative of the provincial government should be an examination of the municipal tax structure. This is something that should be referred to the Fair Tax Commission.

7. Municipal Planning Process

Good planning is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. The major criticism of planning in respect to sustainable development is that is does not effectively deal with environmental or social issues. While more scrutiny of environmental issues is required, referral to the Environmental Assessment Act, as now constituted, is not the answer. Environmental assessments as currently practiced, will not generally facilitate achieving sustainable development decisions, since they evaluate activities on a project basis rather than through a comprehensive approach. Improvements to the municipal planning process are required. Municipalities should have Official Plans that are comprehensive, have certainty, and are applied with consistency.

Direction for municipal planning must come from the enabling legislation - The Planning Act. The Sewel Commission's inquiry into the planning process should examine how the municipal planning process can better integrate economic and environmental issues and address sustainable development in a comprehensive way.

8. Education

Education is often regarded as the key to changing public attitudes and, ultimately, behaviour patterns. While the traditional education system, i.e. schools, universities, colleges, are usually the focus of this discussion, it is not specifically relevant to the urban development sector and would perhaps be more appropriate in the Round Table's strategy document. The concept of "cradle to grave" applies to education as well as resource management. Education is a life long process. If we are to be successful in implementing sustainable development we cannot wait until the younger generation assumes positions of power and influence. We must educate and train the decision-makers and managers of today. The target groups in the urban development and commerce sector are those involved in municipal government, provincial agencies dealing with urban development and commerce issues, and managers in the business sector.

9. Economic Instruments

Governments, both local and provincial, should examine the potential of using economic instruments to achieve environmental objectives. Economic instruments include a variety of measures such as user charges, incentives, taxes and resource pricing which reflects the full cost. Examples of economic instruments for the urban development sector could include user charges for household garbage disposal, full cost pricing for water, and incentives for developing affordable housing and urban intensification.

Economic instruments utilize market forces to lever change. These market forces will also provide new business opportunities in the commercial and manufacturing sector.

10. A Provincial Plan

While the emphasis in this report is on local communities, the importance of a regional perspective must not be forgotten. The ability of communities to thrive is often very much dependent on the regional situation. Regional patterns of urban development across Ontario have been based on locational factors that may no longer be relevant. The legacy that remains is a contrasting pattern of concentration of growth in the golden horseshoe and a large number of single industry towns in both northern and southern Ontario which are struggling to survive. It is unclear what this pattern of development means in the context of sustainable development. There is a need to examine the implications of existing growth patterns on issues such as resource use and economic stability for the province.

A provincial plan or set of regional plans could be a valuable tool to support economic initiatives and community stability.

11. Research and Development

Canada is generally behind other economically advanced nations in research and development and the environment is no exception. Efforts are needed in the areas of alternate technology, that is, more environmentally appropriate technology. Research is also needed to develop new methodologies for monitoring and evaluation. The provincial government is best positioned to facilitate research and development activities. The actual implementation of these activities may be carried out by provincial government agencies, educational institutions or the private sector. However, the province should take the initiative to stimulate new research and development projects.

ELEMENTS OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

1. Urban Intensification

There are many reasons why what has come to be called urban intensification is environmentally appropriate. Studies of cities worldwide suggest that more compact cities not only reduce average transportation distances, but significantly alter both the mix of transportation modes selected and the patterns of trips and destinations. Each one of these factors results in reductions of transportation energy. As well, urban buildings are typically more energy and materials efficient, as is urban (as opposed to suburban) infrastructure (e.g. roads, sewers, a.d. utilities). More compact cities almost automatically reduce the pressures of development on prime agricultural land and quality habitat, such as wetlands and non-urban wooded areas. Shifting transportation patterns will help to reduce impacts on air quality and can free land devoted to automobile transportation for other desirable purposes.

Urban intensification can, of course, be carried out in both relatively desirable or relatively undesirable ways. Environmental advantages will be maximized to the extent that mixed uses can be achieved in designs and configurations which result in a good mix of affordability and desirability. Individuals and families must opt more often for relatively dense mixed-use residential settings. Many factors enter into such decisions and planners and developers must be more mindful of what these are. Considerations of this sort are every bit as important in smaller urban settings as in larger ones. As well, there are a variety of steps which the provincial government can take to promote these forms of development over urban sprawl.

2. Transportation Policies

More compact urban areas which utilize a variety of high quality non-automobile transportation options would be successful both in terms of sustainability and liveability. There are a variety of policy options which can de adopted to promote alternative transportation modes. It should also be recognized that far and away the most cost-efficient and environmentally friendly transportation forms are walking and cycling. Every possible amenity should be provided to stimulate the use of these options and to discourage automobile use. For example, cycling routes should be established and employers, including governments, should offer financial incentives to employees who travel on business by means other than automobiles. A variety of other policies should also be put in place including higher license fees for, or taxes on, larger cars, dedicated highway and road lanes for buses and car pools.

3. Preservation of Agricultural Land

The preservation of prime agricultural land adjacent to or within urban areas is perhaps as important as the protection of environmentally sensitive areas. Unfortunately, because of their financing difficulties, municipalities will almost always opt for the higher value lands resulting from development of agricultural land. For this reason, the province should take a leading role in ensuring the preservation of prime agricultural land and protecting the continued viability of farming.

4. Waste Management

The current system focusing largely on landfill for dealing with waste management issues does not and cannot ultimately achieve optimal results in terms of resource conservation and pollution control. Waste reduction, at source, must become the priority including a special focus on packaging. Municipal waste management must be approached on a rational regional basis and solutions not confined to traditional municipal political boundaries. Inter-regional or extra-provincial waste exporting should be discouraged or eliminated. A decision-making process must be found that will allow for the timely selection of landfill sites and other waste management options. All options, including incineration, should be considered and evaluated regarding relative environmental impacts and economic costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are grouped into two broad categories: the institutional/systemic changes that would support and encourage a continued and ongoing movement toward sustainability and some recommendations related to urban form and economic practice.

Institutional/Systemic Recommendations

1. The Government of Ontario should prepare a provincial policy framework for sustainable development to provide guidance to municipalities. The provinces's role should be to set the agenda for sustainability in the province and to set broad standards for local municipalities. It is then the responsibility of the local municipality to interpret these guidelines and apply them at the local level. A policy framework will provide an important means of protecting provincial interests without direct provincial intervention in local decisions.

2. The Government of Ontario should review all conditional funding programs related to urban development to ensure that contradictions to sustainable practices are removed and that the programs in fact, encourage sustainable practices. Revised criteria for approval should be established.

3. In particular the Public Inquiry regarding the Planning Act should consider whether municipalities have powers adequate to the tasks associated with achieving environmental protection and sustainable development at the municipal level. The inquiry should examine whether municipalities have the ability to respond appropriately to change.

4. The Fair Tax Commission should recognize that non-sustainable decisions are being made as a result of too great a reliance of municipal governments on property taxes and development charges and address this issue.

5. The task force has found that there is a widely held view that there is unnecessary intrusion by the province in local planning decisions. The Government of Ontario should review the roles and responsibilities of local and provincial agencies and authorities with an eye to maximizing accountability to the electorate and avoiding duplication of responsibility both between and within levels of government.

6. Municipal governments should provide leadership-by-example regarding sustainable development to their local communities. They should review all local policies for consistency with sustainability objectives. This may include policies and programs such as purchasing policies, energy efficiency measures in municipal buildings, fleet management, park and public lands maintenance, and waste management within municipal buildings. It can include as well initiatives which promote cycling and public transit (including the use of these options by municipal employees), which undertake to "green" municipal official plans, which encourage sustainability education in local schools, and which promote modified behaviour regarding waste, energy efficiency and land management in local households, businesses and public institutions.

7. The Round Table model provides a new means for achieving multi-stakeholder involvement and for providing informed input to decision-making processes. Support and encouragement should be provided for the establishment of local round tables. This may be an appropriate role to be assumed by an existing provincial organization or the Government of Ontario.

8. The Government of Ontario and local governments should be encouraged to begin state of the environment reports. To accomplish this the provincial ministries should take the lead in research in this field and provide advice to local governments.

9. The Government of Ontario should take a leadership role in research to develop indicators of sustainability. This may be accomplished by specific provincial ministries or agencies or in partnership with universities or other research institutions in the province.

10. The Government of Ontario should take the lead role in providing support and encouragement for alternate technology in the area of municipal infrastructure. This support should take the form of research, information sharing, advice and funding.

11. Training and development opportunities for people working in the public, urban development and commerce sector should be created. Professional organizations and/or training and educational organizations could take the lead in this initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URBAN FORM AND ECONOMIC PRACTICE

1. Both the Government of Ontario and local governments should encourage the sensitive introduction of urban intensification and mixed-use planning. There must be a broad recognition that urban sprawl, in large cities and small, not only imposes unacceptable environmental impacts, but is ultimately unsustainable.

2. The developments which will help to make our cities more compact should be carefully designed, mindful of the environmental impacts of all aspects of construction, and compatible with existing neighbourhoods.

3. In particular, regarding environmentally sensitive construction practices: heritage buildings should be preserved, the materials and embedded energy in existing buildings should be incorporated into new structures, demolition materials and construction wastes should be recycled, and construction materials should be selected on environmental as well as economic grounds.

4. Municipalities and the Government of Ontario should cooperatively undertake a systematic review of contaminated urban lands (former industrial and transportation sites). An investment should be made in developing technologies to deal with this problem. Policies should be developed to support on-site clean-up rather than the current dig and haul approach.

5. The Government of Ontario and municipalities should do more to increase the proportion of Ontarians who walk, cycle, car poll, or take public transit to work and to other destinations. Cycle transportation should be established in urban areas.

6. As well, the Government of Ontario and municipalities should explore creative ways to discourage single-passenger car use in some contexts, particularly for daily travel into and within the urban cores of large cities. Employers (including public sector employers) might be encouraged to institute charges for parking, to provide transit passes, or to pay mileage for business travel by cycle or transit. If there are costs for such encouragement to government they can be covered from reduced highway construction budgets which are appropriate in any case.

7. The Government of Ontario should support the protection of prime agricultural or environmentally sensitive lands at the urban fringe.

8. The designation of environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) should be undertaken by municipalities, regional governments, and/or counties. Development within ESAs should be either prohibited or stringently controlled. The Planning Act should be revised to explicitly protect ESA.

9. Municipalities should explore the possibility of "naturalizing" some of their parkland with indeginous species of vegetation, preserve urban forests and open space. This should allow for reduced dependence on pesticides.

10. Means should be found to achieve the provincial goal of a 50% reduction of municipal solid waste by the year 2000. To achieve this goal composting must be widely accepted, more packaging materials must be recyclable and recycled, and some forms of waste must be reduced or eliminated. The Government of Ontario, in cooperation with businesses and consumers, should review the options for product and packaging re-design. A non-recyclability tax as noted above, might be considered.

11. Municipalities should institute per unit charges for residential collection of municipal solid waste.

12. Water should be metered in those urban locations where this is not presently done. Conservation pricing of water and/or sewage should be undertaken.

13. Economic diversification of single-industry or dominant-industry municipalities should be urgently undertaken whenever possible.

14. A variety of steps should be taken to promote affordable housing; such programs should also promote intensification. At present, the Municipal Non-Profit Housing Program requires municipalities to conduct a "best buy" analysis for the purchase of land for non-

profit housing. Seeking the cheapest land carries a bias against infilling. Additional costs might be offset by combining residential and commercial development in some instances.

15. The building code should be reviewed and changed where necessary to encourage the efficient use of water, electricity and other forms of energy.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide highlights of initiatives, taken by regional and local governments, which seek to promote the principles of sustainable development in an urban context. Only those communities visited by the Urban Development and Commerce Task Force's are addressed in this report.

It should be noted that this report does not seek to rank communities, or their initiatives, as being better, or worse, than any other, nor should it. Circumstances vary widely between communities and therefore, do not allow for direct comparisons. Furthermore, it should be recognized that communities will have different priorities regarding sustainable development. For instance, economic sustainability may be a priority for single industry towns like Sault Ste. Marie or Oshawa, whereas comunities like the Regional Municipality of Waterloo may view intensification and waste management as priorities.

Regional Municipality of Waterloo

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo has undertaken a variety of initiatives to improve the state of the local environment.

The Environmental Services Committee has reviewed environmental services, projects, budgets, and policies to determine how the principles of sustainable development can best be incorporated into the Region's operations.

The Ecological and Environmental Advisory Committee (EEAC) has a mandate which includes: monitoring and protecting areas identified as environmentally sensitive; preparing a regional State of the Environment Report; educating the public on regional environmental issues; and advising Council on environmental alternatives to current planning and management practices.

The Region has established programs to preserve and display historic buildings and artifacts, and to preserve, interpret and document the Region's archaeological heritage.

The Region is responsible for providing the Area Municipalities with an adequate supply of drinking water, and has undertaken a study of local surface and groundwater resources. It has hired a Water Conservation Co-ordinator to advise on water conservation strategies and encourage residents, businesses, and institutions to save water. The Region is reviewing a comprehensive plan for Regional wastewater, completed in 1987, and has developed a set of guidelines to prevent private sewage disposal facilities from harming local groundwater supplies.

The Region has taken a number of steps towards achieving Provincial goals for waste reduction--25% by 1992 and 50% by the year 2000. It opened a new Waste Management Centre in 1990, and expanded its blue box program to include cardboard. In addition the Region is continuing to encourage recycling and reuse by increasing tipping fees at the Regional landfill. The Region has initiated a household hazardous waste program, monitors industrial waste for toxic substances, and recommends disposal methods; monitors landfill leachate and treatment plant effluent; tests water samples for the Health Unit and Water Division; and maintains a spills response unit.

The Region has prepared a priority list for the completion of Watershed Studies in the Region. Once completed, the studies are expected to provide a framework for all land use and environmental planning decisions in the Region.

To educate and involve planning staff, council members, and area residents, the Region has sponsored a conference and public workshop on the future of the Region and organized a workshop on sustainable development.

City of Waterloo

In 1989, the City of Waterloo initiated an "Environment First" approach which ensures that the City looks at the environmental impacts of all City services and programs as well as at the financial, planning, engineering, and social aspects of such environmental actions.

The approach developed out of a municipal think tank on local environmental concerns, at which the Mayor challenged municipal staff to develop practical strategies to protect, manage, and enhance the natural environment within the City.

The think tank resulted in a number of other strategies, many of which have since been implemented. The City has hired an Environmental Approvals and Inspection Officer, a Recycling Coordinator, and an Environmental Coordinator. The latter operates directly from the Chief Administrative Officer's Office, offers information, suggestions and project ideas to business and the public, and is responsible for creating and co-ordinating environmental projects and programs between city departments as well as between levels of government. The Environmental Coordinator is also expected to foster new community partnerships aimed at rehabilitating the environment.

To clarify the view held by some local people that "Environment First" meant "environment only", the Mayor held a second think tank early in 1991. The Environment First Policy Statement developed at that workshop and accepted by Council is the following:

> We the Council of the City of Waterloo are committed to assessing the potential environmental impacts in all City services and programs as part of decision making and to take actions that are within our legal abilities in order to optimize environmental benefit.

City of Kitchener

The City of Kitchener's Environmental Study Group is in the process of developing a Strategic Plan for the municipality. The Study Group is comprised of representatives from each of the municipal departments and is chaired by the Commissioner of Planning and Development. The Group has identified six areas for which it intends to create detailed work programs: Water Resources; Pollution and Environmental Interference; Waste Management; Land as a Resource; Energy Systems; and Natural and Recreational Amenity Areas.

Lack of rental starts and affordable housing in Kitchener are cited as two of the reasons that prompted the City of Kitchener to create its own non-profit housing corporation. More importantly the City wanted to provide developers with examples of intensification that worked to enhance Kitchener's downtown.

The municipal non-profit housing corporation was established five years ago at a time when no new residential development was occurring in the City's downtown area. Since 1986 there have been 1000 units constructed, of which 200 are municipal non-profit. The City has also been attempting to incorporate residential and commercial units into housing projects, but requirements placed on funding by the provincial government deter such mixed use.

The City of Kitchener has reviewed their municipal park system with respect to a more environmentally sensitive management approach. In addition to a study, conducted in 1988-1989, that was designed to assess carrying capacities of existing municipal parks, the City has also undertaken a plan to naturalize its park system. The naturalization process, while initially requiring high capital costs, is expected in the long term to be less expensive than previous labour and energy intensive maintenance measures. Not only will the naturalization of the parks be less expensive financially, the naturalized parks will require less fertilizers, pesticides, energy (e.g. fuel to cut grass) and will create less pollution. The naturalized parks will also provide better habitat opportunities to wildlife.

Regional Municipality of Sudbury/City of Sudbury

The Regional Municipality of Sudbury has incorporated the principles of sustainable development into the Region's operations in a variety of ways.

A key initiative has been the diversification of Sudbury's economy from that of a mining town. An economic summary published in April of 1991 reported that the percentage of the Region's labour force employed in the mining sector has decreased from 40% in the mid-seventies to 14% today. Growth has been primarily in the public administration, service, tourism, and trade sectors.

Strong community support has helped to spearhead this economic diversification. During the 1982 recession, Sudbury organized a conference to address regional economic issues. The result was a community-driven initiative to attract new business to the region. Since that time, Sudbury has become known world-wide for its mining technology. It has become a regional centre for both finance and health. And the creation of Science North has served as a focal point for the Region's tourism industry.

Over the past twenty years the Regional Municipality of Sudbury has undertaken a variety of initiatives to improve a natural environment severely degraded by large scale mining and smelting. A committee of horticultural experts and representatives from government, business, and academia was set up in 1973 to oversee a land reclamation program for the Region. Over a ten year period, the program led to the revegetation of over 2,600 hectares of land along highway corridors and the development of local expertise in land reclamation techniques.

In 1987 the City of Sudbury revised its Official Plan to incorporate a more environmentally sustainable perspective. The new Plan includes as its guiding principles: that development be in harmony with nature; that natural ecosystem processes be respected and incorporated into design, construction and maintenance activities; that air, water, soil, vegetation, wildlife and visual quality be enhanced and improved; that the quality of the built environment be enhanced; and that development be assessed on its long term impact on the environment.

Sudbury's new Roundtable on Health, Economy, and Environment has helped to create an inventory of the natural areas, major features, current development, recreational opportunities, and site potential within the City. It has also taken steps to educate local municipal officials and residents about sustainable development and the adoption of sustainable practices.

A 100-year community improvement plan produced for the Ramsay Lake watershed acts as a broad framework for incorporating principles for sustainability into development within the watershed.

City of Sault Ste. Marie

In recent years, the City of Sault Ste. Marie has been attempting to diversify its local economy. A number of local organizations have arisen to provide input to this process. They include: Hospitality and Travel Sault Ste. Marie (HATS); Community Futures; Economic Development Corporation; and the Waterfront Development Steering Committee. A tri-level government organization, commonly referred to as RAPIDS (Research Action Promote Infrastructure Delegate and Support), was formed in 1991 at the local level as a further mechanism to develop a strategic development plan for the community. Also formed in 1991 was the Premier's Task Force on Algoma Steel.

Sault Ste. Marie currently relies on existing planning and legislative tools to address local environmental concerns. Economic difficulties have restricted the implementation of sustainable development initiatives. It is expected, however, that once the city has successfully diversified its economy, more time, money and resources will be freed towards addressing environmental considerations not already dealt with by current practices.

Sault Ste. Marie has been actively participating in the St. Mary's River Remedial Action Program. The City also participates in a number of other Provincial programs dealing with the environment: the Landfill Monitoring Committee, Recycling Advisory Committee and Conservation Authority.

Town of Midland

In March 1991 the Town of Midland released a report entitled Midland Community Planning Study -- Economic Strategy. The report proposes, among other things, that the concept of sustainable development be incorporated into the Official Plan currently being developed for the Town.

Midland is seeking the restructuring of its municipal boundaries for a number of reasons, some of which are environmental. At present, developers who build in the rural townships surrounding the Town do not contribute to Midland's municipal services and instead rely on private facilities to provide sewage treatment. Contamination from these facilities may eventually show up in local groundwater. When it does, it is expensive, if not impossible, to trace the source of the problem.

Midland recently experienced a capacity shortage at its sewage treatment plant, largely because of industrial effluent which makes up roughly 30 percent of the Town's sewage. In June, 1991, the Town implemented new sewage rates based on the principle of user pay. Large sewage producers changed their processes to minimize outflows, resulting in net extra sewage capacity for the Town. Sewage rates are scheduled to increase from 50% of the water rate to 70% and finally to 100%. By 1993 the revenue realized from the new rate will cover all operating costs.

Midland has also been involved in the Severn Sound Remedial Action Plan and has undertaken a study to find out how best to protect nearby Little Lake as well as Georgian Bay waters on its shoreline. The recently completed York University Study has led to rigid policies with respect to restricted shoreline development.

In general, all development is facing tough new standards with respect to required sanitary services and sound stormwater management techniques. The preservation/development of "green" areas is a must.

City of Oshawa

The principle of sustainable development is evident in some existing policies of the City of Oshawa. For example, in 1988, the City of Oshawa recognized the need to have a diversified ecological system and adopted a progressive park naturalization policy. The City presently has 58 natural parkland areas covering 300 hectares. The City has adopted a policy to reduce pesticide use and encourage a more proactive environmentally friendly pest control program and practices office recycling.

The city presently relies on existing policy and programs to achieve its community goals. For example, Oshawa has, over the years, been involved in several community development programs to improve neighbourhoods and the quality of life of area residents. Community improvement plans have focused on park and community centre improvements, road reconstruction and streetscape aesthetics. As for the natural environment, the Oshawa Official Plan generally recognizes environmentally sensitive areas associated with the Oshawa Creek and Harmony Creek. Additional environmentally sensitive areas are also often identified in Part II Plans.

Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth

Hamilton-Wentworth has incorporated the principles of sustainable development into Regional policy and programs in a number of ways.

In 1990 the Region established a Task Force on Sustainable Development with a two-year mandate to create a vision document complete with a strategy and specific goals for the Region. After an initial public consultation process, the Task Force established eight working groups to examine in detail--and make recommendations on--the issues of: human health; ecosystem integrity; culture and learning; natural areas; community design and well-being; economy, livelihood and education; and food and agriculture. The eight working groups have already held a series of public workshops.

In 1990 Hamilton-Wentworth produced a State of the Environment Report which describes human impacts on local air, water, and land, and outlines the levels of jurisdiction, programs, and practices now in place. While it does not make specific recommendations, the Report does provide general direction on key issues.

In addition to more traditional landfill and recycling programs, the Region operates a Solid Waste Reduction Unit (SWARU) which processes approximately 60% of the municipal solid waste. The SWARU removes metals from waste and incinerates the non-metallic remainder, thus generating the energy used to operate the Unit. In 1989, the SWARU separated almost 5,000 tonnes of metal from roughly 95,000 tonnes of waste. The remaining 88,710 tonnes of waste was reduced to 26,901 tonnes of incinerator ash and sent to landfill. The Region has also held a number of successful hazardous household waste collection days and is investigating the establishment of a permanent drop off depot for these wastes.

Although the Region has designated 37 areas as environmentally sensitive, the ability of ESA designation to preserve these areas is widely debated. Between 1981 and 1991, 49 development proposals subject to ESA policy requirements were not required to submit an Environmental Impact Statement. Critics of the program feel the criteria for designating these areas must be more stringent and The Hamilton Naturalists are conducting an inventory of natural areas within the region.

The Region is examining the creation a Regional Environmental Office with a director reporting to the Health, Planning and Engineering Departments. The mandate includes; making recommendations to Regional Council that implement the vision and goals of the Task Force on Sustainable Development; coordinating the activities of other Regional departments in environmental matters; acting as a liaison between the Region and community groups on environmental issues; advising Council on present health risks related to the physical environment; suggesting measures to reduce these risks and prevent future health risks; and maintaining a comprehensive data base to monitor the health of the environment and threats to public health.

Town of Hawkesbury

After losing its largest employer in the 1982 recession, the Town of Hawkesbury diversified its local economy. Diversification came about through expansion of the light industry sector. A number of factors have been credited with this success. The Hawkesbury Economic Development Corporation initiated a program to develop the necessary infrastructure to attract light industry. The proximity of Hawkesbury to Ottawa-Carleton, Montreal and Mirabel International Airport are also credited with providing Hawkesbury with an economic advantage, not to mention economic challenges. Finally, the high quality of life enjoyed by residents, the well established consumer's market, the drive of existing enterprises and bilingual staff have been cited as factors which enabled the community to attract new business.

The Town of Hawkesbury relies on current policy and programs at the municipal and provincial level to protect the environment and has taken recent initiatives and efforts to help sustain and develop measures aimed at achieving sustainable development within the community.

Metropolitan Toronto

The primary goals of the Metropolitan Toronto Government Strategic Plan provide the basis for Metro's sustainable development initiatives. The four primary goals are: a vital economy, environmentally sustainable urban development, social equity and accountable governance. The general objectives and action plans for each of the goals establishes a framework and timetable for sustainable development measures or practices to be initiated by Metro.

The strategic plan elaborates on each of these primary goals with general objectives and action plans. The action plans for the sustainable development section encompass a number of issue areas such as global responsibilities, solid waste, resources, water quality, soil, air quality, urban form and information

Metro is currently in the process of developing a new Official Plan. This process has produced a number of discussion papers which examine how sustainability can be achieved in Metropolitan Toronto. "Towards a Livable Metropolis" provides a philosophical framework for reorienting decision-making processes towards the goal of healthy, sustainable communities. The paper proposes 15 initiatives, many of which reflect and elaborate on the directions identified in the Strategic Plan: the development of an information base on the state of the environment and appropriate indicators of change; the establishment of targets; and the implementation of remedial actions.

"The Proposed Policy Initiatives for the New Metropolitan Official Plan" follows the themes of healthy environments, social well-being and economic vitality. The preliminary discussion of proposed policy also includes specific recommendations for strategic investment in urban infrastructure. Other documents such as "Guidelines for the Reurbanization of Metropolitan Toronto" and the new Metropolitan Waterfront Plan examine the opportunity to achieve environmental goals through redevelopment and the application of sustainable development principles through an ecosystem approach.

Special Metropolitan Toronto Programs span both global and local concerns. Among its international efforts, Metro is participating with 11 cities internationally in the Urban CO2 Reduction Project which is being coordinated by the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (I.C.L.E.I.). Locally, Metro and the Conservation Council of Ontario are joint sponsors of a project to develop a community action plan designed to help align local and individual environmental actions with strategic priorities. Also the Works Department has recently completed a series of studies and public consultations that culminated in a long-range waste reduction plan. Lastly at an operational level, Metropolitan Government departments have completed waste audits, and efforts are being made to purchase environmentally sound products.

City of Ottawa

The City of Ottawa's commitment to sustainable development is expressed in its recent effort to develop an environmental conservation strategy for the city. The city embarked on the development of the conservation strategy in the fall of 1990. The strategy development process was integrated with the review of the Official Plan and included an extensive public consultation program.

The philosophical underpinnings for the conservation strategy are derived from the "Vision for Ottawa" as expressed in the Official Plan. The vision states that "in the future, Ottawa will embrace sustainable urban development as the rights of the individual and the needs of society are balance with the need to conserve our natural resource base and enhance the natural environment. The vision statement continues with a number of principles that will guide decision-making.

The new Official Plan, which was approved by City Council in May 1991, has incorporated sustainable development principles in its approach to land use planning. What distinguishes this plan from others is the fact that it integrates the environment throughout the plan and provides a sustainable perspective to all aspects of policy. A chapter on environmental management is a key component of the plan. The Environmental Management chapter is not meant to be a stand-alone set of policies. Rather, all chapters of the Plan (housing, employment, transportation, etc.) reflect the goals and objectives of the Environmental Management chapter. specific examples of sustainable policies include a designation of a greenway system to provide a continuous network of lands and related waters that connect all parts of the city, policies to protect the urban forest, the inclusion of a wildlife Habitat section, identification of constraints on land resources (e.g., contaminated sites, unstable slopes) and the incorporation of a municipal environment evaluation process.

The Environmental Conservation and Management Strategy is a corporate effort and reflects participation from all department within the city. The strategy focuses on two major themes: the ecosystem approach as a management tool and the operational level (implementation programs). Six programs are identified in the strategy: 1) state of the environment reporting, 2) municipal environmental evaluation, 3) protection, conservation and rehabilitation, 4) research and development, 5) the community and City in partnership and 6) education and awareness.

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